Efficacy of the LIFESTEPS® Weight Management Program on markers of adiposity

Jenna E. Heller, Kathleen Woolf, PhD, RD, Terri Verason, MS, RD, Barbara K. Paulsen, MS, RD, and Tracy Pfaffenerber, RD, CD.

ABSTRACT

INTRO: Obesity is a serious public health problem, associated with many co-morbid conditions. Because multiple weight loss methods are available, it is important to identify which are most effective in weight management.

PURPOSE: Study examined the efficacy of the LIFESTEPS® Weight Management Program on markers of adiposity. This program consists of 10-16 weekly meetings, and combines nutrition, physical activity, and behavior change principles.

METHODS: 1592 participants (85.7% female, 14.3% male; age range 16-82 y; weight range 52.3 – 251.4 kg; body mass index [BMI] range 21.0 – 82.9 kg/m^2) enrolled in the program between 2003 and 2009. Paired-sample t-tests determined the impact of the program on initial and final markers of adiposity. Data analyzed using SPSS and significance was determined if P<0.05.

RESULTS: Body weight (initial 97.1 ± 23.3 kg; final 92.7 ± 22.4 kg; p <0.001), BMI (initial 35.2 ± 7.4 kg/m^2; final 33.6 ± 7.2 kg/m^2; p<0.001), waist circumference (initial 109.5 ± 15.2 cm; final 103.1 ± 14.6 cm; p<0.001), and waist-to-height ratio (0.66 ± 0.09; final 0.62 ±0.09 cm; p<0.001) decreased significantly between the initial and final assessments for the 1131 participants completing the program. When participants were asked to select three behaviors most helpful for weight management, 63.7% reported “keep food records,” 40.2% reported “measure serving sizes,” 39.8% reported “do aerobic exercise,” and 39.4% reported “record calories.”

CONCLUSION: Participants of the LIFESTEPS® Weight Management Program significantly decreased markers of adiposity. Programs that emphasize nutrition, physical activity, and behavior modification seem to be the most effective in weight management.